

The home nasogastric tube (NGT) feeding programme

Information for children, families and carers

This factsheet provides some initial information on nasogastric tube (NGT) feeding at home. We hope it helps to answer some of your questions. If you have any further questions or would like more information, please contact us using the details at the end of this factsheet.

What is a nasogastric tube?

A nasogastric tube (NGT) is a specially designed tube through which a baby can be fed milk.

When would my baby be considered for NGT feeding at home?

If your baby is receiving feeds via an NGT in hospital, it may be possible for you to take them home with the tube in place, so they can establish fully oral (by mouth) feeds at home. This has many advantages, including:

- allowing your baby to be discharged home earlier
- reducing your baby's exposure to hospital-acquired infections
- giving you the privacy and comfort of establishing full breast or bottle feeds in your own home.

Your baby would be considered for NGT feeding at home if:

- you are comfortable to go home NGT feeding
- you are willing to complete an NGT training package
- your baby is medically well
- your baby's weight is stable
- your baby can maintain their temperature in an open cot
- your baby is feeding at least three-hourly
- your baby can complete a minimum of two sucking feeds with good coordination in 24 hours.

What if my baby pulls out their NGT at home?

Your baby's NGT will need to be re-inserted by a healthcare professional. This may be carried out by a member of our neonatal community outreach team (NCOT) while you are at home, or if out of hours, the NGT can be replaced on the neonatal unit. All babies on the home NGT feeding programme will be able to take some milk orally (by mouth), so you should not need to bring your baby into hospital in the middle of the night if they pull their NGT out.

How will I learn how to feed my baby at home using an NGT?

You will receive training from the nursing staff in the hospital until you feel comfortable using the NGT at home. It is a good idea to keep a copy of your NGT competency booklet to remind you of the correct way to use your baby's NGT. It is important that you ask questions if you are unsure of any part of using the NGT, as there is a lot of information to take in and it can feel daunting.

You should only use breast milk or infant formula. Never put medications down the NGT unless you have been specifically told to by a healthcare professional.

What happens when my baby is discharged home on NGT feeding?

Our NCOT will fully support you at home. We will visit you at home, and you will be able to contact us via telephone using the details at the end of this factsheet.

As your baby's feeding improves orally (by mouth), you will be able to reduce the amount of feed you give through the NGT. There will be a guide to help you with this. Your baby's weight will be monitored to make sure they are growing enough.

Your baby will be able to bathe as normal. You may need to change the tape that secures the NGT, if it becomes damp.

Your baby will also be able to go out of the house as normal, so the NGT should not interrupt the normal routine for your baby or family.

What are the risks of having an NGT?

When the guidance is followed, NGT feeding is safe. However, every medical procedure has some risks:

- When an NGT is inserted, there is a small risk of it going down the wrong way into the lungs instead of the stomach. The tube could also move if it is accidentally pulled or if a baby vomits or retches. (Wrong position of an NGT becomes obvious when the position of the tube is checked).

For these reasons, it is essential to check the position of the NGT after it is passed and **always** before the tube is used to give feed.

The tube can be removed without causing damage if it's not in the correct position.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about the home NGT feeding programme, please contact us.

Neonatal community outreach team (NCOT)

Telephone: **07766 994816** (Monday to Saturday, 7.30am to 4.30pm)

Woodland ward (special care baby unit)

Telephone: **023 8120 6553** (out of hours)

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